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DELFINÉ GAY GIRARDIN.

From the Spanish of Emilio Castelar.

THE memory of this remarkable woman is tenderly cherished by all the large literary circle among which she lived, and which she held, by her talent and grace, as with a spell of enchantment. Delfine cannot be called one of the great lights of modern literature. She neither brought the world captive to her feet, nor shed abroad the light of immortality. She was like the melancholy and silver moon, whose radiance, though pale and reflected from larger orbs, is always poetical. Her elegance of expression, her delicacy of thought, the tenderness of her feelings, and the truth of her emotions, have given her a high position among modern writers, from which the two great evils of the present time, ingratitude and envy, have failed to remove her.

Delfine wrote lyric poems, dramas, tragedies, comedies, novels, pamphlets on various Parisian topics, all with never-failing vivacity, and with success seldom equaled. None of her works bears the stamp of great genius. None of them possesses a classic perfection; neither that colossal grandeur, oftentimes monstrous and disproportionate, which characterizes modern romantic literature. But they are all models of feminine grace, full of melody, inspiring repose, and exciting imagination to graceful and poetic visions.

There is a species of literature in France which exists in no other country—the literature of the *salon*. Women shine brilliantly in this particular sphere, and attract many admirers, whom they hold fast by their talent and magnificent conversational powers. This peculiar style of literature, however, although delightful and fascinating, is always superficial. It possesses more intellect than inspiration, more artistic feeling than original and true ideas; and is utterly wanting in that profound depth of thought, subjective and to the fullest extent psychological, which is one of the principal characteristics of German literature. A poet or writer who receives his inspiration from the *salon*, who seeks no wider audience, no other applause than he finds there, converts the ideas which gather in his brain into mere hot-house plants, feeble and beautiful and transient, which in larger light and freer air might have expanded into sturdy growths, holding themselves fast against the storms of generations.

Poetry, although by nature subjective, is eminently social. Both the epic poets and the singers of ancient times had all the voices of their people for a grand chorus. Pindar's odes were sung with musical accompaniments at Grecian festivals, and all the people believed they heard only their own thoughts, expressed by the poet in divine language, to be passed onward to posterity. In the deep ocean-like murmuring of the soul of a people there are always torrents of inspiration for the true poet. For this reason, I have said that all poetry is eminently social. But

the grand social spirit of peoples, where the ideas of an age glow together, condensing and shaping themselves into everlasting form, must not be confounded with the artificial socialism of the *salon*. When the Tribune grew dumb, when the liberty of thought was silenced, when the Cæsars reinstated the Consuls, and the Legions the Senate, the divine classic spirit of poetry passed from the hands of the people, under the influence of the *salon*, and there became like the inflated corpse of its former self.

It is true that in the literature of the French *salon* there is nothing revolting nor degrading. In France, as in Greece, it was difficult to rob poetry of all its

port of the family. Their house was very small, one apartment serving as parlor, dining-room and bed-chamber. But the refined spirits of the mother had made two little oases in this barren home, a balcony filled with flowers and birds, and a tiny boudoir where were placed a few cherished remains of former prosperity, and where the youthful Delfine used to creep away to write her first poems.

The literary reputation of her mother brought them many illustrious friends, and her own beauty won admiration from all who saw her. At eighteen years of age her beauty was of that character which clings to the memory like a heavenly vision, exercising mag-

ical power upon all who beheld it. She was tall, slender, graceful, with a face and mien both sweet and queenly; her finely arched brows shaded a pair of clear blue eyes, and her long golden hair fell in luxuriant, glistening curls about her shoulders. The *ensemble* of her face and figure formed a beautiful combination of the Anglo-Saxon and Roman type, rarely seen, even in France.

Together with these natural attractions, Delfine possessed great amiability of character, which sprang not alone from the purity and goodness of her heart, but also from the influence of a tender mother, saddened by poverty, who placed all her hopes on her beautiful and talented daughter.

In 1822, Delfine sent her first poem to a literary competition of the Academy. It won extraordinary honors, the students all uniting in praise of the young muse, confounding their admiration of her beauty with enthusiasm for her verses. In this poem she sang of the noble heroism of the Sisters of Charity, and in others which followed soon after of the death of Napoleon, the glorious rising of the Greeks for their independence, the last day of Pompeii, with all its tragical horrors, and other subjects which excited her youthful imagination.

All these poems were specimens of exquisite emotional feeling, with but little, if any, original thought. The soul of Delfine was like an Æolian harp agitated by the faintest breath of air, sensitive to every beautiful object about her, as the surface of a quiet lake changes its color with the

least variation of light; her heart was like soft wax, receiving all the impressions of her times. She was no director of the public conscience, nor did she give a single new thought to the nation. She had no sovereign conception of realities. The pure surface of her mind was a mirror where all the ideas of the century were reflected,—a receptacle into which they fell to be returned again beautiful by delicious fantasy; not strengthened, but softened and rendered harmonious.

Such beauty and talent would not fail to attract many admirers. The journalists all united in sounding her praises, happy if their fair words gained them the reward of a smile. The court of the Bourbons awarded her a pension, and the leading men of the time deemed her friendship a high honor.

Her fame crossed the Alps and the Pyrenees, and



UP IN THE TREES.

merit. A thing so beautiful could not be changed at once in its entire nature, and while it lost its depth and immortal inspiration, it retained all its airiness and grace, which, its solid merit being gone, rendered it essentially trivial in character.

I have said that women were especially distinguished in the life of the *salon*. It is impossible to open a book of this grand literary epoch of France, which extended from the first to the second Empire, without meeting the name of Madame Recamier. What is the secret of her renown? The *salon*! A muse of the *salon* was also Delfine Gay. She was educated in a modest home where poverty was by no means unknown. Her father had held a high administrative position under the Empire, but fell into disgrace, was retired, and after that occurrence the literary labors of Delfine's mother were the sole sup-

in various journeys through Italy and Switzerland she found herself surrounded by those who, having read her works, eagerly sought her friendship. She had reached so high a position that her friends imagined a grand marriage for their favorite, and even went so far as to think seriously of a union with Charles X., hoping that Delfine might have the influence of a Madame de Maintenon over this descendant of Louis XIV. It is said that Charles himself was eager for this marriage, but the cares of the throne separated him from thoughts of matrimony.

A wealthy banker sought the hand of Delfine in marriage, but she refused to listen to him. A celebrated Roman nobleman fell deeply in love with her, but the patriotic woman had decided never to marry except with one of her own countrymen. To her re-unions there came a young man of very remarkable character, at this time possessing neither name nor fortune—Emil Girardin. And to him Delfine gave her heart and hand.

From that time she entered into the tempestuous life of her husband, into that rushing whirlwind of ideas and actions; of enterprises both political and mercantile; of passionate contests, victory, defeat, applause and condemnation; of ardent friendships and bitter enmities, where seasons full of power and honor alternated with those of deep despondency and apparent ruin.

The influence of Girardin produced not only an entire change in the style of journalistic writing, but a complete remodeling of the economics of the French Press. By his powerful editorials and by startling schemes for financial combinations, calculated to draw

forth capital from the depths of that society where it lay hidden as secret as gold in the mine, Emil Girardin attracted thousands of readers to his paper, which seemed specially designed to carry a new sensation daily to the satiated and weary mind of the French public, and which, by its brilliant versatility, compelled admiration, if it did not always command the approval of sober judgment.

Delfine contributed much toward this success with her sparkling *feuilletons*, genuine monologues of the *salon*, where keen criticism, elegant epigram, and above all a clear and chaste style, fascinated her readers, and revealed this brilliant spirit in a new aspect.

Having once entered the lists as a combatant, the vivacious and versatile mind of Delfine allowed itself no rest. She labored incessantly. The audacity of

her husband, whom she loved and admired at the same time, gave her courage. The sparkling brilliancy of her achievements may now excite a pardonable regret for the genius and talent thus bestowed upon ephemeral literature.

The friendship of a man of talent, who at that time controlled the French stage, sustained her in her passion for the drama. She made many failures in this particular branch of literature, but in several instances met with remarkable success. One of her classic tragedies, "Cleopatra," is full of Egyptian feeling, and the beautiful queen of old is as real a creation as if she had risen from her tomb to tread

TEMPTATION. — "The man who is not tempted is dead, or is not born. He does not live. That it is different with woman, what man who knoweth her dare declare? It was she who tempted man in the beginning, and it is she who will tempt man to the end. 'Who is she?' asked the old alcalde of every malefactor whom his alguazils dragged before him. 'Truth lies at the bottom of the well,' quoth he, 'and woman at the bottom of every crime.' " The old cynic who wrote this died long ago, and nobody wept at his death. Certainly no woman wept for him. How *could* any woman weep for such a man?

It may have been true that Mother Eve tempted

Father Adam, in the little matter of the apple, as the Good Book relates, but that was long ago. We have changed all that since, and to-day it is not woman who tempts man, but man who tempts woman. What has woman to live for except man? He is the temptation by which she is tempted, and to which she yields. It is her fate. It takes many shapes. In one it seems love of fine clothes; in another, love of society; in a third, love of admiration. This is the shallow way in which men see it. If they looked deeper they would see more than this. They would see that woman's love of admiration, of society, and of fine clothes, was love of man.

What is the "Temptation" that worldly knowledge is whispering in the ear of rustic simplicity? It is not fine clothes and an idle life—song, and dance, and wine—she has read her prayer-book too long to be tempted by these. It is what is behind them and what she yearns for. It is Man, poor woman! It is a man who loves her. Who is he?



TEMPTATION.

the boards. In the exquisite apologue of "Joie fait Peur," her whole woman-soul reveals itself in all its delicate purity and virgin-grace, and no one can listen to it without shedding those tears which form the immortal diamonds of the poet's crown.

In the zenith of her glory, at the height of her fortune, loved by her friends, and deeply respected even by the political adversaries of her family,—when her powers and talents had reached a glorious ripeness, Delfine was called to give up her work. Consumption rapidly undermined her delicate constitution, and one starry night in June, her eyes fixed on the clear heavens, Delfine fell asleep forever, with a sweet smile upon her lips, as if her soul had ascended from this life to the world above, in the embrace of divine harmonies.

— Helen S. Conant.

UP IN THE TREES.

WOULD we were there in the woods together —
Two little birds in the midsummer weather!
Out of the winter, away from sorrow,
With — think of it! — never a thought of the morrow!
Up in the trees, whose branches are swinging,
They sit in the soft airs, singing, singing
A song in which youth and passion are blended, —
That is always beginning, and never ended!

Look at them there now, sitting, sitting
Where owls are hooting, and bats are flitting: —
One is singing, the other is sleeping,
While the Lady Moon through the leaves is peeping! —
And now look at us, — whose years are doubled,
We have missed so much, and have been so troubled —
Would we were there in the woods together —
Two happy birds in the midsummer weather!

— John Sydney.